

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 are pending. No amendments have been made by way of the present submission, thus, no new matter has been added.

In the outstanding Office Action the Examiner has required Applicants to elect one of the following five groups:

Group I, claim(s) 1-17, drawn to a chromatography device;

Group II, claim 18, drawn to a process of phase separation;

Group III, claim 19, drawn to a process for affinity chromatography;

Group IV, claim 20, drawn to a process for ion exchange; and

Group V, claim 21, drawn to a process for preparing samples for combinatorial chemistry.

Applicants respectfully traverse. The Examiner has asserted that the inventions listed in Groups I-V do not relate to a single general inventive concept pursuant to PCT Rule 13.1 since, allegedly under PCT Rule 13.2, they lack the same or corresponding special technical feature. That is, the Examiner asserts that claim 1 is either obvious or anticipated by Maiefski et al., USP 6,309,541. Applicants respectfully traverse.

The Examiner has simply asserted that Maiefski renders claim 1 either obvious or anticipated. However, even if this were hypothetically correct, a point with which Applicants disagree, the pending claims, directed to the device, could still be free of this prior art document. The Examiner has made no attempt to establish the obviousness or anticipation of claim 1, let alone claims 2-17. As such, inventions of Groups I-V, would remain linked, not only by claim 1, but also by any of the remaining claims 2-17. Applicants note that the claims of Groups II-V

simply relate to different processes of using the installation device according to any one of claims 1-17. Accordingly, the Examiner's application of Unity of Invention is improper and should be withdrawn.

However, in order to be fully responsive to the outstanding Office Action Applicants hereby elect Group I directed to claims 1-17. This is an election with traverse.

Further, Applicants point out that given allowable subject matter for the "installation" of claims 1-17, any method of using the installation, which includes all of the limitations of the allowable claim, should be rejoined.

Favorable action on the merits is respectfully solicited.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Craig A. McRobbie, Registration No 42,874 at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for


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any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

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